

My Lifetime Hobby

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About 40yrs ago, in my teens, I started to keep tropical fish. I built my first fish house which was a lean to shed measuring 16ft x 7ft (all my measurements are in old money !!), I used all reclaimed wood. There were about 30+ tanks of varying sizes. The room was heated by a paraffin heater which on a couple of occasions nearly set the shed on fire - the third time the shed was completely destroyed and the few tanks and fish I managed to save came into the house allowing me to keep my hobby. I've since learnt that the heater should have been kept cleaned on a regular basis - what would I know at my age! There are nothing like mistakes to further ones education and I have made a lot.

At that time I used to breed run of the mill fish i.e. Angels, Dwarf Gourami's, Three Spot Gourami's, and Kribbs etc. Then I met a gentlemen named Phil Jinks, he was keen on Guppies and specialised in short tailed varieties. He introduced me to the local Guppy show which was put on by the FGBS. This Society was beginning to fold, Phil was also a member of the FGA (a splinter group) and was on the judging list at that time - I was hooked! The high-light of my week was to go with him to collect Daphnia to feed his fish.

When I remarried I moved from Birmingham to Kidderminster, best day's work I ever did! A close neighbour had a Koi pond and my interest in fish was rekindled, I talked him into helping me build a pond in my garden. The original plan was a 3,000 gallon pool but due to torrential rain the sides fell in and I ended up with a 5,000 gallon pond! Pleased me, but not the wife! I've had the pool for nearly 8 years. To heat it I had a gas boiler fitted into the brick built garage (size 20ft x 10ft.) This also held my 500 gallon quarantine tank. Pool and tank being fibre glassed.

I then came to the idea of adding a radiator and converting most of the garage into a fish room, well insulated with thermal blocks.



Three years ago I started breeding Discus. Remembering the happy days collecting Daphnia I decided to venture out locally to collect some for my fish. I went over a field which led to a pond. I did notice some cows grazing but on my return from a successful catch, the cows saw my white bucket and began to chase me. My wife was waiting at the gate, hysterical at the sight before her! , there I was arms outstretched, carrying a large white bucket full of water, followed by a heard of cows in top gear! Once a city man, always a city man!

After the successful breeding of Discus I went on the import Red Crystal Shrimps from Hong Kong. Now I have them everywhere, at least 700. This type are reported to be difficult to keep, if anyone is interested in any, please email me.



My present set-up consists of 24 tanks of varying sizes, plus the 500 gallon tank now used to hold the shrimps. There is no natural light so I use fluorescent lighting on a timer, my filtration is mainly box and sponge filters fed by a 40w Hi-Blow pump, this is attached to 3/4 inch waste pipe which takes air to all my tanks via air valves. I also have a 50 gallon tank in which I store RO water mainly for my Discus (kept in the house), Red Crystal Shrimp and Corydoras. Two of my tanks are heavily planted, one with *Cryptocoryne Affinis* (by far my favourite) and the other with Christmas Moss.

I do regular water changes, the waste being pumped out using an Eheim 1250 pump. Last year

I purchased 6 Sterbai Corydoras, in March this year I salvaged 25 eggs and the fry are now over 1 inch in length. About the same time I purchased my Red Delta Guppies from Derrick



Clayton, excellent quality. I then saw on a website an albino red Delta, these appealed to me and I made further enquiries. Having now obtained 6 Albinos, three males and three females, it's another learning curve - genetics!

Since I have mentioned this to my wife she has enlightened me with her knowledge of genetics as I now find she has written a book, before we met, on foreign bird breeding. It feels like I've married a new women!

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